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SUBJECT: LRA UPDATE AND UNMIS DIRECTED BY DPKO TO RESCUE LRA
ABDUCTEES IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

REF: 09 KHARTOUM 1405

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On January 5, SPLA Director for Military Intelligence Major General John Lat Zakeria briefed us on the movements and whereabouts of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Sudan. He explained that while there had been a presence of LRA in Southern Sudan, the majority of LRA were now in Southern Darfur and the Central African Republic (CAR). Also on January 5, UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Lise Grande told us that UNMIS had been requested by DPKO in New York to look into the presence of 450-600 LRA abductees in Southern Sudan. If present in Sudan, UNMIS was requested to rescue and transport the abductees back to their countries of origin. The request was made to the UN in New York by the Fellowship of Christian Councils & Churches in the Great Lakes & Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) along with Dr. Nyekorach-Matsang, LRA/M Peace Representative and Anton Baare, Nordic Consulting Group (NCG) Denmark. UNMIS Deputy Security Advisor Lee Peterson visited Western Bahr el-Ghazal to verify reports of the LRA presence. End Summary.

LRA Presence in Southern Darfur

¶2. (SBU) On January 5, SPLA Director for Military Intelligence General John Lat Zakeria briefed us on current LRA movements and locations. He explained that the SPLA had killed three LRA fighters west of Bor Medina in Western Bahr el-Ghazal early in January, but that the majority of LRA had moved north into southern Darfur. In particular, he alleged that the LRA had established a large camp of 350-400 fighters and "family" members or abductees south-west of Kafia Kingi and another 70-100 LRA fighters were in Am Dafok. Zakeria also told us that the SPLA believed the janjaweed have a training camp in Am Dafok under the guidance of notorious janjaweed leader Ali Kosheif (Note: Ali Kosheif was indicted by the International Criminal Court in 2007 on charges of committing war crimes in Darfur and currently remains at large in West Darfur). Zakaria alleges the 70-100 LRA are possibly training with 200 janjaweed in Am Dafok.

UN Directed to Rescue LRA Abductees

¶3. (SBU) Also on January 5, UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Lise Grande told us that UNMIS had been tasked by UN Headquarters to verify the presence and release of 450-600 Lords Resistance Army (LRA) abductees, ex-combatants and family members in Western Bahr el-Ghazal and Northern Bahr el-Ghazal states. In December, the Fellowship of Christian Councils & Churches in the Great Lakes & Horn of Africa (FECLAAH) sent letters to the UN Mission in the Congo (MONUC) as well as UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in New York requesting that the UN assist in the humanitarian release of LRA abductees in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Southern Sudan. Additionally, Dr. Nyekorach-Matsang, LRA/M Peace Representative and Anton Baare, Nordic Consulting Group (NCG) Denmark also met with LRA representatives and the UN to raise their concerns and need for UNMIS involvement in their release.

¶4. (SBU) Grande explained that the group along with Baare and Matsang had been lobbying for UN assistance with the LRA since September 2009. The group recently approached UN DPKO leadership in NY stating that the LRA abductees were mostly in Raja and Aweil counties. Grande explained to us that the UN had no information

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about an LRA presence in Southern Sudan, but due to the pressure of Baare and Matsang they were forced to investigate.

¶5. (SBU) We explained to Grande and later to UN Deputy Security Advisor Lee Peterson that while the LRA was believed to have been present in Western Bahr el-Ghazal in late November and December, the numbers had always been small. As previously reported (see reftel), the LRA had been present in areas along the border of Western Bahr el-Ghazal and the Central African Republic, but only to pillage nearby villages for supplies and resources and stage a few circumstances abductions. At no time was there reliable information that the LRA had a presence in Aweil, Northern Bahr el-Ghazal.

UN Investigates Claims

¶6. (SBU) On January 7-8, Peterson traveled to Raja and Bor Medina in Western Bahr el-Ghazal to meet with SPLA present in the region. The last reported attack or presence of LRA in the area was December 17 outside of Bor Medina, they claimed. Along the border, the SPLA had also found a number of abandoned LRA camps. They believe the camps held 60-70 fighters and approximately 300 abductees, however they have since been abandoned. Peterson spoke to UN colleagues and SPLA present in Aweil, who reported that there were no LRA present in the area. Peterson responded to UN DPKO in New York stating that the LRA and abductees were no longer present in Southern Sudan; however, it was believed they are currently present in Southern Darfur and CAR.

¶7. (SBU) Comment. We are not convinced that the LRA is yet present in any significant number in Darfur, and we do not judge that their presence nearby has tipped the military balance in the Darfur area.
WHITEHEAD